

BondBrother, BondSister

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Category: Halo

Genre: Adventure

Language: English

Status: Completed

Published: 2006-03-29 06:48:03

Updated: 2006-03-29 06:48:03

Packaged: 2016-04-26 23:15:32

Rating: T

Chapters: 5

Words: 4,302

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: A Hunter's greatest fear is dying alone that's why they operate as a team but just how strong is the Bond between two partners? Especially two partners who can't stand each other?
COMPLETE!

1. An unlikely pair

The Marine never had a chance.

His boot caught on a root and he fell onto the ground, hard. His unit had been stationed to scout ahead for the Earth Forces, but even the strange Halo planet itself seemed set against them.

Winded, he scrambled to his feet. The heavy footsteps booming behind him seemed to jump-start the beating of his heart and he pulled himself up using a rock. His breath coming in ragged terrified gasps. The familiar feeling of terror began to creep into his limbs; the weak tingle that made fingers fumble on triggers and thoughts scatter to the wind.

He skidded through a gap in two rocks just as a huge explosion of plasma fire shattered them to pieces behind him. He was sent flying and hit a tree, weakly struggling to get to his feet again.

Blinking against the blood trickling from a gash in his forehead, he watched a shard of rock jump as the booming footsteps grew closer. They suddenly stopped as a shadow fell over him and his eyes widened in terror, looking up at the black and blue figure reaching down for him.

"Oh God! Please! No! I-urrrrk!"

There was a ripping sound and the dusty ground was spattered with blood. The Marine's body was dropped with a thud and the creature lumbered off, it's footsteps making the shards of rock jump again. All the time, the Marine's listless eyes stared at the creature's

retreating back.

The Marine never had a chance.

"Well?"

The Hunter half stepped, half hopped down the steep slope. Her companion noted the slight grin on her face reached her dark green eyes with a sparkle.

"I don't think the Human will be bothering us any more." She lopped over to the Arms container and punched in the security code. It slid open with a muted beep and a sharp-edged insignia flashed onto the display screen. She pulled out a chilled and pressurized silver canister of plasma and snapped it into the huge cannon on her arm.

"He wouldn't have found us if you hadn't been playing with the other humans." Her companion spoke to her turned back. She cast a lazy glance to the dead Humans lying under a tree barely a few Units away.

"You can't deny me my fun, T'Larc." She turned and eyed him up and down, "Even if you don't have the ability to stomach it." The male Hunter's spines straightened with a snap in anger.

"You're little 'fun' almost compromised the mission, T'Priel." He snarled. T'Priel grunted at the male and lopped away, continuing the patrol of the area that she was supposed to have been doing before the Human Marine showed up.

"Sometimes I wonder why I was bonded to you." T'Larc hissed after her. She gave the Hunter equivalent of a sigh; a harsh rattling sound made in their chest cavities.

"And I youâ€|" She snapped back, hopping around the rock bluff that marked the inner ring of their territory. "â€|stiff-spined *_do'ssar_*". She swore to herself as she started patrolling the outer ring of the area.

She remembered the day they'd been Bonded together, as all warriors of their kind were. It hadn't been that long ago either â€" this was their fifth mission as a team together.

T'Priel closed her eyes, breathing in deeply; she remembered the familiar smell of the ceremonial smoke used in the ritual bonding, the feeling of tension in the room as the Hunters tried to anticipate who they'd be Bonded with.

:_Do you see anything?_:

The message cut through her thoughts, along the Bond T'Larc and she shared. Her eyes suddenly snapped open in irritation and she replied mentally â€" and somewhat viciously,

:_No!_:

She felt his presence in her mind fade and she continued the patrol. T'Larc had been the last Hunter she'd expected to be Bonded with; even whilst in training they'd never got alongâ€| and their

relationship hadn't improved with time.

The purpose of the Bonding was that the two partners would together make a perfect whole. T'Larc was cunning - a brilliant strategist - whilst she was a fighter. Sure, he was a good fighter - but he'd never beaten her one-on-one. The same as she was an average battle coordinator - all Hunters had to be - but still not as good as T'Larc. Maybe the Prophets had hoped he'd influence her into being a more obedient soldier.

Yes - when the sky on her home planet turned blue.

As much as she hated to admit it though, she'd always felt irritatingly fond of him. He was always dependable; a constant that was always there to dig her out of whatever trouble she got herself - and sometimes him - into.

She shook her head - making her spines shudder - and half-smiled, continuing her lopping patrol of the perimeter.

2. Alone for the first time

T'Larc was finding it hard to meditate.

T'Priel was beyond the far perimeter, so he could no longer sense her Bond. The sense of aloneness was unnerving and made it hard to concentrate. He flexed his fatigued limbs and loped over to another spot, relaxing slightly when the small part of T'Priel in his mind faded back into existence.

He lazily half-closed his eyes and set about organizing his thoughts. It was this organization that had made him such a sharp thinker - a warrior who depended on logic. Not at all like T'Priel. He gritted his teeth in irritation; the Hunter never seemed to know whether she was coming or going. She simply slew first and asked questions later - if the female even bothered asking questions. They hadn't even been Bonded for long, but he could still read her like a data report. She was so incredibly like a child sometimes!

A rustle of leaves made his eyes suddenly snap open and he looked around. Seeing nothing, he went back to his thoughts. Despite their bickering though, they did make a very good team; what she lacked in brains, she made up for in speed and ferocity. He could always count on her to tear their way out of a bad situation - of course they'd fight over her endangering herself in the process, but it was the norm.

He felt their Bond fade again, and he blinked uncomfortably. She was doing this on purpose - she knew that he didn't like it when the Bond was broken. Hunters were always Bonded; to the parents from the minute of birth, then to their Brothers and Sisters whilst in training, and finally to their Bond-Partners when they entered Military service. Deep down, the feeling of being alone was every Hunter's nightmare. He'd seen his Brothers and Sisters in times when their Bond-Partners had fallen into death; the feeling alone was enough to drive them mad.

He stood, moving again to find a spot where she was within sense, but stopped when the light glinted off something in the

trees.

Humans!

With a roar, he spun his Fuel Rod Cannon around and fired into the trees, making them exploded into flame and ash. There was a round of cries from the hills as bodies fell from the trees and other soldiers opened fire.

The Bond was broken again as T'Priel moved, and T'Larc felt the unfamiliar lance of fear strike through his stomachs.

:_T'Priel! I've engaged the enemy!_: He called. There was no answer, only the cold sense of aloneness closing in. He shuddered as several of the metal projectiles from the Humans broke through his armor and lodged themselves in his leathery flesh. Ignoring the stinging pain of the projectiles he fired his Fuel Rod Cannon again, sending the pale, delicate bodies of the enemy flying backwards against the rock wall where they fell and stayed.

:_T'PRIEL!_:

3. Adversaries

Finally given the chance for her anger to cool off, T'Priel loped back to the inner perimeter. It was T'Larc's turn to patrol now and she was hungry. She reached the rock bluff and froze, hearing the sound of the Earth Forces gunfire. She charged her Cannon, her spines snapping rigidly straight as she prepared to go to battle.

:_Bond-Sister!_: T'Larc's voice rang desperately in her head. She snarled and leapt into the battle, firing her Cannon at the cluster of Humans making their way down the hill.

:_Someone started the battle without me!_:

Vaulting over the entrance to the compound, she landed with a crash next to T'Larc and fired her cannon again. Seeing a human approaching the entrance, she snarled and spun; her spines ripping his flesh. He fell to the ground and stayed. She felt a sting as several of their projectiles pierced her armor and stumbled back, shaking her head to clear the pain from her mind. She leapt into the air and landed on two soldiers, crushing them with her massive claws.

Her vision suddenly blurred as she felt something hit her from behind and she fell to one knee. The soldiers suddenly turned their guns on her and she activated her shield, managing to send some bullets back at them. A round blinking object suddenly rolled past her, sticking to one of the Humans. He saw it and started clawing at it, screaming in terror.

Out of nowhere, a clawed hand grabbed her waist and flung her backwards just before the Plasma Grenade detonated, spraying the hillside in blood and ridding them of the last of the Humans.

A silence fell over the gully.

T'Priel stayed on her back for a moment, employing the use of her

third lung to catch her breath again. She pulled herself weakly to a sitting position. Beside her, T'Larc offered her a clawed hand. She took it and stood up uncomfortably.

"Thankyouâ€| for-" She said, her voice strained.

"Thankyou for coming back." T'Larc turned and reloaded his Fuel cannon.

There was another silence. T'Priel gave a noisy sigh.

"What I saidâ€| about being â€|Bonded to you-"

"You didn't mean it." He cut her off with a claw. There was another silence and he loped off, taking up the patrol again. He stopped, till facing away from her, "Oh, and never do that again T'Priel. That's an order." He said simply and disappeared around the rock bluff.

"I thought you weren't coming back." He mumbled to himself when he'd disappeared from her sight.

T'Priel sat down, still eyeing the hills for any Humans that may have survived the fight. Satisfied she wasn't going to be surprised, she pulled another cylinder of chilled plasma from the Arms container and reloaded the Cannon on her arm. She hesitated for a moment then snapped the clips on her wrist open, letting the cannon drop to the ground with a thunk.

She stood, wobbling for a moment as her body adjusted to the absence of the cannon's weight, but she soon recovered her balance. She closed her eyes and breathed in before beginning a series of training exercises. Hunter close-combat usually revolved around using your spines and shield together. She spun and leapt with surprising grace for a massive 6-foot creature with bent legs.

T'Larc had his own stupid 'sitting down and organizing his thoughts' to relaxâ€| and she had her training. It was the only time she could be perfectly alert and her reflexes lightning sharpâ€| especially without that damn cannon weighing her down all the time.

Halfway through she stopped, suddenly losing the motivation, and looked at the pale skin that had been under her Fuel cannon. On her wrist was a tattoo; the symbol that faded into existence once two Hunters were Bonded. T'Larc had one exactly like it.

Strangely enough, whenever she looked at it, it reminded her more of her Bond to T'Larc than her duty as a soldier. A sudden thought struck her; maybe that was their point?

"Why stop?"

She spun - spines stiffening - and grunted in irritation when she saw that T'Larc had returned. She scooped her cannon from the ground and slid it onto her arm with a snap.

"_Don't_ sneak up on me like that." She growled.

"I had no idea you could move that fast." T'Larc watched her lope past him.

"Now you do." She hissed through her teeth. T'Larc snapped his teeth in frustration,

"If we're going to be Bonded for the rest of our lives, we should at least try and get along with each other."

"And what if I enjoy-" T'Priel's answer was cut short by a explosion at their feet. Both Hunters were sent flying apart.

"**_Sshk_**!" T'Priel swore and gritted her teeth as she leapt to her feet; What use was them patrolling when the Humans always managed to sneak up on them? Maybe they were just bad at it.

She wiped a trickle of blood from the corner of her mouth and charged her cannon. T'Larc beat her to the Humans though, and sent a blast towards them that splintered the tree-trunks into toothpicks. _Much_ different from usual.

:_What was that supposed to be?: T'Priel asked him. He looked in her direction and grinned, showing his very long teeth.

:_I made a few adjustments to my cannon_.:

"Pretentious **_do'ssar_**" T'Priel muttered and fired her own cannon. It was dodged by three Humans and hit the cliff behind them, sending a rockslide that took their attention off the Hunters in front of them for a few moments; just enough time for T'Larc to leap up the hill and skewer two Humans before they could turn around again.

He retreated behind the hill as they turned their guns on him and activated his shield. He continued to fire his cannon as T'Priel crept around the side of the cluster of trees to the top of the hill. She had a clear shot to the side of their flanks from there. She shook her head and smiled; they would never learn. She sent a ball of green plasma rocketing towards them and howled in triumph when three Humans were sent flying through the air with the dirt and rocks that had been around them.

Without warning, something hit her armor with incredible force. It winded her and made a crack split across her chest armor from one side to the other. The sharp sound made a lance of fear shoot through her. She staggered backwards as another rocket hit her straight on and sent her tumbling down the hill.

4. A promise made

T'Larc saw the rockets hit her and was surprised at the force of the tiny objects. She fell roughly down the hill and he felt anger stir in him when he saw the Humans following her and trying to pick her off whilst she was wounded. How dare they attack his Bond-Sister! With a roar, he charged up the hill and scattered the Humans left and right " skidding around and snapping his teeth savagely as they retreated back to the cover of the trunks of the trees.

"T'Priel, are you hurt?" He pulled her to her feet. She wavered for a moment then shook her head, as if clearing a fog from her mind.

"No, just rattled." She hissed in pain and held a hand to her broken armor, which was leaking bright orange blood.

"Rattled?" He narrowed one eye and fired his cannon into the trees, not particularly aiming. While the Humans were occupied with the flying shrapnel, the two Hunters hopped around the rock formation that provided them with cover and hid the Arms container from open view.

T'Priel sat down for a moment, still trying to catch her breath after the impact of the rockets. Even with three lungs she felt herself grow dizzy from lack of oxygen.

T'Larc punched his access code into the container's holopad and pulled out another silver canister, though this one had a raised button on the end and a needle on the other.

"Hold still," He growled, "This will hurt." He pushed the needle between a crack in her armor and pressed the button. There was a hiss of compressed air and a liquid was shot into the open wound.

T'Priel snarled and clawed the ground in pain, but felt the tissue regenerating under her armor. After a moment, the numbing effect of the chemicals erased the pain altogether. She flicked the dirt out from under her claws and straightened her bruised spines.

"Ready?" T'Larc asked her, charging his cannon again. She grinned and charged her own,

"Ready to take on the armored Demon himself."

The mention of the invincible Human soldier made T'Larc pause for a moment. He had a sudden thought; what if the Human forces sent him here? They were guarding the only entrance to the facilityâ€¦ a facility that the Humans wanted to enter. Badly.

He glanced across at T'Priel and saw that she must have been having the same thoughts as him.

"T'Larc, before we go back into battle, promise me one thing." She said softly.

"Yes?"

T'Priel blinked her huge green eyes, fear flitting behind them. "Don't let me die alone, Bond-Brother." T'Larc nodded.

"I swear to you," He growled, "We fight for victory, or till our death." He clasped claws with T'Priel and she nodded shortly,

"Victoryâ€¦ or death."

He tightened his cannon on his arm and looked around the bluff once more, ducking his head back as projectiles ricocheted off the rock.

"They're slowly advancing down the hillâ€¦" He paused, "â€¦ very slowly." She grinned, "I think we scare them, Brother."

"Good. Let's give them a reason to be scared. Make your way around the bluff to the ledge where we were dropped from the shipâ€¦ I'll occupy their attention by attacking one of their transport vehicles. When I've managed to draw them into a group, open fire."

"How do you know I won't hit you too?"

"Don't worry about me." T'Larc growled, "It would take more than a hit from a Fuel Rod Cannon to destroy me." T'Priel nodded and started loping off.

"And T'Prielâ€¦" She stopped and looked back. T'Larc narrowed his eyes, "You must not be seenâ€¦ no matter what happens."

She nodded curtly and disappeared into a cluster of trees.

T'Larc said a small prayer to the Prophets for victory then activated his shield and charged around the bluff. The Marines dove for cover, attempting to fire at the charging behemoth as their ranks scattered.

He roared and fired his cannon at the nearest soldier; the force of the point-blank weapon ripped him apart and his dead body landed twenty feet away, followed by his smoking limbs and weapons.

Ignoring the stinging of the Human's weapons T'Larc spun, picked up a Human and threw him into the ranks of his comrades.

:_Fire now!_: He told T'Priel. Barely two seconds later, the ground exploded beneath the Human's feet. Two or three bodies hit the bloodstained ground and were stillâ€¦ the others scrambled to find cover behind rocks and trees.

That was when things started to go wrong.

T'Larc growled and started advancing on the nearest Human who was scrabbling backwards in the dirt, ignoring the stones that cut his palms as he moved. The Hunter stopped shook his head, making his spines crack.

"Boo." He snapped in his own language. The guttural rumble that the Human heard had the effect on the Human that he wanted; it sprang to its feet and turned tail into the trees. T'Larc gave the Hunter version of a smug grin; it would be around about now that the Humans would realise that they'd been backed into a corner.

A sudden green-brown blur amongst the tree trunks surprised the Hunter, and smashed over the logs lying not three feet away from him. A Marine, driven mad with terror, had jumped into a Warthog and floored the accelerator. It lurched over the hill, slamming into T'Larc with a sickening crunch. He shuddered, roaring in pain and folded to the ground; his legs crushed.

5. A promise kept

:_T'Larc!_:

T'Priel saw her companion fall and felt fury surge through her limbs.

With a massive leap, she jumped from the small rock shelf and landed on the concrete of the facility entrance. The solid rock beneath her shattered as a spiderweb of cracks spread from her clawed feet under the impact.

She snarled, leaping into the air again and landing on the bonnet of the vehicle, and picked the Human up like a rag doll, flinging him onto the ground where he remained, dazed. She hopped down from the bonnet with a massive crash and placed a huge clawed foot on the Human's soft body. She felt his bones snap satisfyingly as he screamed in pain. She leaned over her right foot harder and heard the satisfying crack of his skull as it crumbled like an eggshell. She stepped off the rushed body of the Human, giving her foot three shakes that spotted the concrete with red blood.

:_T'Larc_:

The crumpled Hunter's form only twitched slightly. T'Priel turned her massive head towards the trees menacingly, hearing the frenzied chatter of the Humans as they struggled to determine a defense.

T'Priel fired her cannon into the trees again, though knew that she'd missed the Humans. A round object bounced down the hill and stopped next to a rock directly in front of her. She grunted in confusion for a moment then took a step backwards when she realised what it was.

Too late.

The Frag Grenade exploded, peppering the Hunter with metal and shredding her thick skin. She roared in fury and staggered back, her normally green vision bleeding to red, then fading to black. She felt blood trickle from her ruined eyes and stumbled around blindly, activating her shield and firing her cannon blindly into the darkness.

:_T'Larcâ€| I can't see! Where are you?_:

She could feel him, but had no idea where he was. Everything was darkâ€| empty... the icy clamp of aloneness started to tighten around her chest. She felt the Humans cease their fire, realizing that she was helpless. They chattered at her in their meaningless high-pitched voices as she wildly swung her head left and right.

:_T'Larc! You swore I wouldn't die alone!_:

She heard the familiar charge of a Fuel Cannon and an explosion rocked the ground beneath her feet, followed by the cries of Humans dying.

:_â€|and you won't_.: T'Larc's presence in her mind shattered the darkness like glass. The feeling of being alone subsided, though still ate at the back of her mind.

She paused. For a moment, all she could hear was the beating of her heartsâ€| and the ragged breathing of the Humans.

Her head swung around blindly and she sniffed the air. It was tainted with the metallic stench of the red Human body fluid. She hissed and

swung her head around again, following the scent of her Bond-Brother. She took a step forward, slamming her foot into the ground. Sure enough, the Humans moved â€" betraying their positions. The battlefield suddenly drew itself in T'Priel's mind.

With a roar, she fired her Fuel Cannon â€" this battle was far from over.

When T'Larc's eyes sparked back to life, the valley was still. What had happened? The memories suddenly rushed back to him, and he was made painfully aware of his ruined legs.

"**_Sshk Taaâ€|_**" He swore in pain and hissed. Dragging himself to his arms, he looked up and saw T'Priel crumpled on the ground in a pool of orange blood not three lengths away from him. He crawled over to her, even as his vision rocked from side to side, the blood from his injured legs leaving orange smears on the ground. Her breathing was shallowâ€| two of her lungs had already collapsed.

:_T'Priel_â€|: T'Larc rolled picked her up with his clawsâ€| as awkward as that was with his long claws and her spines. He felt a pang of sadness when he saw that her eyes â€" her beautiful green eyes â€" were ruined. Shredded by the frag grenade.

"Did Iâ€| getâ€| them allâ€|?" T'Priel rattled weakly.

"Of course you did, Bond-sister."

Her spines drooped sickly,

"You keptâ€| yourâ€| promise,â€| T'Larc." She gently bumped her blue forehead with his â€" between Hunters, a sign of intimate respect. "A Hunter never dies alone."

She shuddered again, her spines shivering with the movement. T'Larc gently lay his head on her chest, feeling the numbness in his right side spread across his chest like icy fingers. T'Priel drew one last rattling breath then was still. T'Larc felt their Bond sever, the feeling of emptiness making his stomachs shudder. He closed his huge eyes, feeling her spines under his claws shift and fall slack as her massive heart stilled.

With one last effort, he pulled the cannon off his arm and threw a look at their Bond Tattoos. Weakly, he clasped their claws together and fell back down to die. He felt the sense of being alone start to crush him, making his chest tightenâ€| but he wasn't afraid.

He was a Hunterâ€| he would never be alone.

End
file.